

Illinois Department of Public Health

COVID-19 Hotline RFP

Prospective Respondent Questions

Staffing Requirement Questions

1. Question – Does the vendor need to have a medical professional licensed in the State of Illinois secured when submitting this bid?

Answer – The potential vendor needs to demonstrate that they will have a medical professional licensed to practice in the State of Illinois secured prior to the contract start date and proof of that medical professional's approved license.

2. Question – Is there a minimum or maximum number of operators and supervisors required?

Answer – Each vendor will need to determine their own operator staffing requirements to ensure they can meet the 2,500 per week call volume and any peaks in call volume beyond the anticipated weekly call volume, and the requirement that callers should not be placed on hold for more than 5 minutes. As stated in the Request for Proposal (RFP), a minimum of one supervisor who is a medical professional licensed to practice in the State of Illinois is required. There is no maximum number of operators or supervisors. Staffing levels must be sufficient to meet the parameters outlined in the RFP.

3. Question – What is the required degree of dedication for the call center agents?

Answer – The degree of dedication for call center agents is up to each vendor.

4. Question – Will the agency assist the vendor in the recruitment of the required physician(s), physician assistant(s), advanced practice nurse(s), or registered nurse(s) licensed to provide direct patient care in Illinois?

Answer – The vendor will be expected to perform their own recruitment. The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) will not assist in the recruitment of any staff.

5. Question – Would we be able to partner with an organization for support of the on-call medical professional?

Answer – The vendor may partner with any organization(s) for support of the on-call medical professional, but responsibility for the medical professional will be solely the vendor's.

6. Question – Do the employees need to be based in Illinois because it is an Illinois program? Can they work from home?

Answer – Employees and/or subcontractors do not need to be based in Illinois. Each vendor will determine their employees' or subcontractors' work site(s).

7. Question – Would the licensed medical professional be required to take transferred calls from the call center personnel or do they function primarily as an internal answer-point to the call center staff?

Answer – It is the vendor's responsibility to determine how calls will be managed with the licensed medical professional and all other staff. IDPH only requires that a minimum of one licensed medical professional be available at all times during business operations to provide support for Hotline staff either onsite or remotely when the current script does not address the callers' questions, and to act as a Subject Matter Expert (SME) to work jointly with IDPH to develop updated scripts and training.

8. Question - What is the split of bilingual versus English calls?

Answer – IDPH does not have any past call volume statistics on English versus non-English phone calls.

Call Volume/Length of Call Questions

1. Question – What is the average call time for patients calling into the Illinois Department of Public Health's COVID hotline?

Answer – The average call time for the Illinois Department of Public Health COVID hotline is approximately 8-10 minutes when the caller chooses to speak to an operator.

2. Question – What is the current average call time duration per incoming call?

Answer – The average call time for the Illinois Department of Public Health COVID hotline is approximately 8-10 minutes in the event that the caller chooses to speak to an operator.

3. Question – Is the estimated 2,500 weekly call volume a combination of both IVR and live agent calls? If yes, how many are live agent calls?

Answer – The estimated 2,500 call volume weekly is for live agent calls only. The estimated total calls, including IVR, is approximately 5,000.

4. Question – What is the average handle time per call for the volumes that were shared?

Answer – The average call time for the Illinois Department of Public Health COVID hotline is approximately 8-10 minutes in the event that the caller chooses to speak to an operator.

5. Question – What are the call volumes for each day by hourly interval so we can forecast to submit a more accurate cost? - Preferably this would include: average length of call by call reason/type and what % of each call reasons/type, if possible.

Answer – The Illinois Department of Public Health does not have call volumes by hourly interval or type of call. The average call time for the Illinois Department of Public Health COVID hotline is approximately 8-10 minutes in the event that the caller chooses to speak to an operator. This is for both public health and non-public health related calls.

6. Question – What is the average length of call? - Preferably the information would be available per question type.

Answer – The average call time for the Illinois Department of Public Health COVID hotline is approximately 8-10 minutes in the event that the caller chooses to speak to an operator. This is for both public health and non-public health related calls. The Illinois Department of Public Health does not have call volumes by type of call.

Technology and Data Questions

1. Question – Would the Illinois Department of Public Health be open to using a two-way chat communication platform for patients and medical professionals to use?

Answer – Only telephone communication is allowed.

2. Question – Does IDPH expect the vendor to export the case information that is stored in vendor ticketing system once the engagement is complete?

Answer – All case information is the property of the Illinois Department of Public Health. Once the engagement is completed, that data should be surrendered to the Illinois Department of Public Health in an agreeable format and removed from the vendor's system consistent with all HIPAA and PHI requirements.

3. Question – Does IDPH have any specific retention requirements for the data that is collected during this engagement? Is the vendor expected to retain this data for any period of time after the engagement is completed?

Answer – Illinois Department of Public Health expects the vendor to retain data for the duration of the contract and to comply with the record retention provisions stated in the contract, which may extend beyond the contract term.

4. Question – Does IDPH require the vendor to record and store any of the interactions (voice, text message, email, etc.) that occur during the tracking process?

Answer – Illinois Department of Public Health only requires that the vendor provide the information listed in the RFP. The daily written report should include the case number; the date and time of call; the caller zip code and county; the caller's reason for calling including the

questions the caller posed; information provided to the caller by the vendor's staff; the healthcare provider's institution, employer, or business affiliation, if applicable; and for IVR calls, reports must include the number of callers and which prompt was selected and which message each caller received.

5. Question – Does IDPH require the vendor staff to connect to any IDPH-owned systems to enter/pull data that may require access (username/password) and connectivity (VPN)?

Answer – Illinois Department of Public Health does not require the vendor staff to connect to any IDPH-owned systems.

6. Question – What is the sensitivity of the data to be collected? PHI? Are there any special requirements with regard to how this should be handled?

Answer – The COVID-19 hotline vendor may receive Protected Health Information (PHI) from callers. PHI should be handled according to all PHI and HIPAA legislated requirements and contract provisions.

7. Question – Page 4, #4 (a) - What does "case number" refer to? Is this the vendor's internal number or a specific state case number we need to integrate?

Answer – "Case number" refers to the vendor's internal numbering mechanism for distinguishing calls.

8. Question – Page 5, #2 – please provide more specific details on "best practices"?

Answer – The COVID-19 hotline vendor may receive Protected Health Information (PHI) from callers. PHI should be handled according to all PHI and HIPAA legislated requirements and contract provisions.

9. Question – "Plan for data collection, tracking, and daily submission of a call log to the State. All data must be exportable to Excel or otherwise transferrable to the State in an agreed-upon format" - Does IDPH have a preferred format?

Answer – Excel is the preferred format.

Contract-Specific Questions

1. Question – Attachment D requests pricing for one year, while the RFP states this is a six-month contract. Does Illinois Department of Public Health anticipate this contract will be extended for one year?

Answer – The initial term of the contract is for at least six months. However, the Illinois Department of Public Health reserves the right to extend the contract for an additional six months.

2. Question – What estimated or actual dollars were paid last year, last month, or last quarter to any incumbent(s)?

Answer – No prior spending information can be provided as the pricing methodology is different than the model established for this RFP.

3. Question – What is the estimated budget for this contract?

Answer –The budget will be determined after reviewing proposals and corresponding pricing.

Hotline Functionality Questions

1. Question – We understand that facts and information surrounding COVID-19 are rapidly evolving; can the agency provide a full script/sample responses to the FAQ (Attachment B)?

Answer – Upon contract award, the Illinois Department of Health will provide updated FAQs and sample responses on a regular basis (as often as daily). The vendor will be expected to train on and utilize these FAQs and responses in their daily hotline provision of services. Based on call content, vendor should identify any additional FAQs that require IDPH's preferred answer to these additional questions received from callers.

2. Question – Does the Illinois Department of Public Health have a target hold rate for patients calling the COVID hotline?

Answer – Illinois Department of Public Health would expect both public health and non-public health related inquiries to be placed on hold for no longer than 5 minutes.

3. Question – What is the maximum wait time for calls in queue?

Answer – Illinois Department of Public Health would expect both public health and non-public health related inquiries to be placed on hold for no longer than 5 minutes.